

ALASKA DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND GAME

DIVISION OF COMMERCIAL FISHERIES

NEWS RELEASE



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2009 BRISTOL BAY SALMON SEASON SUMMARY

The following is an overview of the 2009 Bristol Bay commercial salmon season. Fishing has been completed in all districts and preliminary harvest totals should be representative for all species.

The 2009 inshore Bristol Bay sockeye salmon run of approximately 40.43 million fish and preliminary catch of 30.90 million sockeye rank 22nd and 7th, respectively, since statehood. This year's total inshore run was 7% above the 20-year average (1989–2008) of 37.68 million and was 20% higher than the preseason forecast of 33.78 million fish. All districts came in above forecast, most notably the Ugashik and Egegik Districts at 64% and 33% above forecast, respectively. The Nushagak District total run was 12% above forecast, while the Togiak and Naknek/Kvichak Districts came in 15% and 7% above forecast, respectively. The commercial harvest of sockeye salmon was 29% above the 23.99 million preseason forecast. Bay wide total escapement was 9.53 million sockeye salmon.

Approximately 30,000 Chinook salmon were harvested in Bristol Bay in 2009. This is 47% of the average harvest for the last 20 years and significantly below the forecasted preseason harvest of 70,000 fish. The chum salmon harvest of 1.37 million fish was 34% above the 20-year average of 1.02 million fish. The coho salmon harvest of approximately 59,000 fish was 63% of the 20-year average of 93,000. The pink salmon harvest was approximately 499 fish, an expected low catch for an odd year life cycle return.

EXVESSEL VALUE

The 2009 harvest of all salmon species in Bristol Bay was approximately 32.36 million fish. To derive a preliminary estimate of the exvessel value of the fishery, the figures listed in the following table were used. These figures represent an estimate since the contribution of future price adjustments, loyalty bonuses, and differential prices for refrigerated versus non-refrigerated fish were not included. The calculated preliminary exvessel value of the 2009 Bristol Bay salmon fishery is approximately \$129.47 million, which is 8% above the 20-year average, and ranks 9th over that same period.

| Species | Average price/Lb. | Average Weight | Number of Fish | Total Weight | Value |
|---------|-------------------|----------------|----------------|--------------|---------------|
| Sockeye | \$0.70 | 5.9 | 30,899,473 | 182,306,891 | \$127,614,824 |
| Chinook | \$0.75 | 17.5 | 30,402 | 532,035 | \$399,026 |
| Chum | \$0.15 | 6.3 | 1,366,469 | 8,608,755 | \$1,291,313 |
| Pink | \$0.20 | 3.2 | 499 | 1,597 | \$319 |
| Coho | \$0.40 | 6.9 | 58,777 | 405,561 | \$162,224 |
| Totals | | | 32,355,620 | 191,854,839 | \$129,467,706 |

ALLOCATION

The 2009 season was the 12th year of managing drift and set gillnet sockeye salmon harvest allocation in four of the five districts in Bristol Bay. The Togiak District is excluded from the allocation plan. The following table lists the allocations adopted by the Alaska Board of Fisheries in November, 1997 and the resulting harvests by gear group, from June 1 to July 17, for the 2009 season.

| District | Drift Net Percent of Harvest Allocated /Caught | Set Net Percent of Harvest Allocated /Caught | Set Net Percent of Harvest Allocated /Caught |
|-------------------------|--|--|--|
| | | | <i>Naknek:</i> 8% / 12% |
| <i>Naknek / Kvichak</i> | 84% / 80% | 16% / 20% | <i>Kvichak:</i> 8% / 9% |
| <i>Egegik</i> | 86% / 85% | 14% / 15% | Not applicable |
| <i>Ugashik</i> | 90% / 87% | 10% / 13% | Not applicable |
| | 74% / 76 % | 26% / 24% | <i>Nushagak:</i> 20% / 20% |
| <i>Nushagak</i> | WRSHA: 74% / N.A. | WRSHA: 26% / N.A. | <i>Igushik:</i> 6% / 4% |

Strategies used to achieve allocation percentages between gear groups included varying the amount of fishing time and providing separate gear group openings. In 2009, processor capacity limited the department's ability to manage catch by gear group according to percentages established by the Alaska Board of Fisheries.

SPECIES PERFORMANCE

Sockeye Salmon

The 2009 inshore sockeye salmon run of 40.43 million fish was 20% higher than the preseason forecast of 33.78 million. Runs versus forecasts by district with deviations from forecast are listed below.

| District | Forecast | Inshore Run | Deviation from Forecast |
|----------------|------------|-------------|-------------------------|
| Naknek-Kvichak | 12,110,000 | 12,925,769 | 7% more |
| Egegik | 9,590,000 | 12,728,326 | 33% more |
| Ugashik | 2,380,000 | 3,899,163 | 64% more |
| Nushagak | 8,930,000 | 9,988,322 | 12% more |
| Togiak | 770,000 | 888,226 | 15% more |
| Totals | 33,780,000 | 40,429,806 | 20% more |

2009 preliminary commercial sockeye harvests compared to the 20-year averages by district:

| District | 1989–2008 Average Sockeye Harvest | 2009 Sockeye Harvest |
|----------------|-----------------------------------|----------------------|
| Naknek-Kvichak | 8,510,000 | 8,519,345 |
| Egegik | 8,700,000 | 11,582,050 |
| Nushagak | 5,230,000 | 7,670,753 |
| Ugashik | 2,690,000 | 2,553,045 |
| Togiak | 491,000 | 574,280 |
| Totals | 25,621,000 | 30,899,473 |

Sockeye salmon escapements by river system are listed in the following table. Escapements into the Igushik, Togiak, and Ugashik rivers were above established ranges. All other systems were within established ranges.

| River System | SEG Range | Escapement |
|-----------------------------|----------------------|------------|
| Kvichak River | 2,000,000–10,000,000 | 2,266,140 |
| Naknek River | 800,000–1,400,000 | 1,169,466 |
| Alagnak River ^a | 320,000 minimum | 970,818 |
| Egegik River | 800,000–1,400,000 | 1,146,276 |
| Ugashik River | 500,000–1,200,000 | 1,346,118 |
| Nushagak River ^b | 340,000–760,000 | 484,149 |
| Wood River | 700,000–1,500,000 | 1,319,232 |
| Igushik River | 150,000–300,000 | 514,188 |
| Togiak River ^c | 120,000–270,000 | 313,946 |

^a Alagnak River lower bound SEG is 320,000 with no upper bound since the stock is not actively managed.

^b Nushagak River optimal escapement goal (OEG) is 235,000–760,000.

^c Togiak River has a biological escapement goal (BEG) of 120,000–270,000. All other escapement goals for sockeye salmon in Bristol Bay are Sustainable Escapement Goals (SEG).

Potential processing capacity issues was the only major preseason concern entering the 2009 Bristol Bay salmon season. Similar to the last 3 years, the winter of 2008–2009 was colder than the historic average, suggesting that run timing might be delayed by a few days. Given the projected harvest of 23.99 million sockeye, the department planned to allow more fishing time early in the run. A substantial component of the run appeared in fishing districts earlier than historic timing, with most districts fishing daily by June 17. The earlier than expected pulse of fish brought the harvest through June 27 to 6.42 million and prompted the beginning of processor limitations on June 28. On June 30, a harvest of 1.39 million fish prompted all districts, except Togiak, to see widespread processor suspensions and limits. Daily harvests remained strong, keeping many companies on limits and culminating a July 3 harvest of 2.06 million sockeye, the largest of the season. Although daily harvests exceeded 1.60 million from July 4 through July 7, no limits or suspensions were reported after July 6. On July 13, daily harvests dropped below 500,000 fish and many permit holders began to put their boats up for the season. The total harvest and total inshore run was 29% and 20% above forecast, respectively. Also of significance in 2009, the Naknek River Special Harvest Area was not opened for the second season since 1995.

Chinook Salmon

Chinook salmon harvests in Bristol Bay districts were below average in every district. There were three directed Chinook fishing periods in the Nushagak District with 10 fish harvested in the first period on June 7, 536 harvested in the second period on June 11, and 329 harvested in the third period on June 21. After the third Chinook period, the directed Chinook fishery remained closed and the Department switched focus to active sockeye salmon management due to the increasing abundance of that species. Both Chinook salmon catch and escapement increased in late June. Approximately 30,000 Chinook were harvested during the directed sockeye fishery with the majority harvested between June 22 and July 7. The final Nushagak River Chinook escapement of 81,480 was above the 75,000 inriver goal established in the Nushagak Mulchatna King Salmon Management Plan.

2009 Chinook salmon preliminary harvest data by district.

| District | 1989–2008 Average Chinook Harvest | 2009 Chinook Harvest |
|-----------------|--|-----------------------------|
| Naknek-Kvichak | 3,098 | 938 |
| Egegik | 937 | 275 |
| Ugashik | 1,461 | 714 |
| Nushagak | 52,290 | 24,058 |
| Togiak | 9,302 | 4,417 |
| Totals | 67,088 | 30,402 |

Chum Salmon

The 2009 total Bristol Bay chum salmon harvest was approximately 1.37 million fish. All districts produced harvests above their 20-year average. The Nushagak District was the largest producer of chum salmon, where over 775,000 fish were harvested.

Pink Salmon

Pink salmon runs are strong during even years in Bristol Bay. Low demand for Bristol Bay pink salmon and an off-cycle year produced an incidental harvest in 2009. Approximately 499 pink salmon were harvested, with the majority caught in the Nushagak District (310).

Coho Salmon

The bay-wide harvest of approximately 59,000 coho salmon was 63% of the recent 20-year average of 93,000. The majority of the coho harvest was in the Nushagak District, where most fish were caught from mid July to mid August. In the absence of any coho salmon enumeration projects in Bristol Bay, lower than historic harvest levels and effort are thought to be more indicative of market availability than an indication of run strength.

PROCESSOR CAPACITY

In 2009, processor capacity limitations began impacting Bristol Bay salmon fisheries on June 28, with some suspensions occurring in the Nushagak District. Although Togiak District saw no limits or suspensions in the 2009 salmon season, on June 29, limits or suspensions occurred in all other districts through July 1. Processors proactively managed harvesting capabilities of their

fleets according to their individual needs. Companies imposed control on harvest by district, tide, and gear group to varying degrees. On July 2 and 3, some form of suspensions or limits were in place in half of the districts. Limits and suspensions continued in most districts through July 6. To respond to industry capacity issues, the department liberalized fishing times, allowing processors and permit holders to determine how to utilize their resources in the most efficient manner. While limits were in place, the department lost the ability to control escapement resulting in a loss of harvestable yield in some districts as fish passed into the escapement.

Estimates of lost yield by district (in numbers of sockeye salmon).

| District | Escapement | Catch | Escapement Goal | Approximate Lost Yield |
|----------------|------------|------------|---------------------|------------------------|
| Naknek/Kvichak | 4,406,424 | 8,519,345 | 4,000,000 | 500,000 ^a |
| Egegik | 1,146,276 | 11,582,050 | 800,000–1,400,000 | 0 |
| Ugashik | 1,346,118 | 2,553,045 | 500,000–1,200,000 | 146,118 |
| Nushagak | 2,317,569 | 7,670,753 | 1,190,000–2,560,000 | 200,000 ^b |

^a Naknek/Kvichak estimated lost yield attributed to the Alagnak River, where management for the Kvichak River contributed to additional escapement.

^b Nushagak District estimated lost yield attributed to the Igushik River, where both processor capacity and a lack of fishing effort contributed to additional escapement.

Summary of processor limits by day, gear type, and district (in pounds). Minimum to maximum known single permit boat limits are given; dual permit boat limits are not provided here. There may have been additional limits for a certain company or companies of which the Department is unaware. If a company suspended for a tide then the range is suspended to the highest limit or unlimited. There were no limits in the Togiak District in 2009.

| Date | Ugashik DGN | Ugashik SGN | Egegik DGN | Egegik SGN | Nak/Kvi DGN | Nak/Kvi SGN | Nushagak DGN | Nushagak SGN |
|------|----------------|----------------|------------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-----------------------|-------------------|
| 6/28 | U | U | U | U | U | U | U | S ^a |
| 6/29 | 7,000-U | 3,200-U | S ^a -U | S ^a -U | 5,000-U | U | S ^a -U | S ^a -U |
| 6/30 | 7,000-U | 3,200-U | S ^a -U | S ^a -U | S ^a -U | S ^a -U | S ^a -9,000 | S ^a -U |
| 7/1 | 4,000-12,000 | 2,800-U | S ^a -10,000 | S-U | 4,000-U | 2,000-U | 4,000-10,000 | 2,000-U |
| 7/2 | 9,000-U | 2,000-U | 6,000-U | 3,000-U | 6,000-U | U | U | U |
| 7/3 | 9,000-U | 2,000-U | U | U | 8,000-U | U | S-U | S-U |
| 7/4 | 9,000-U | 2,000-U | 9,000-U | 3,000-U | 9,000-U | U | 9,000-U | S-U |
| 7/5 | 7,000-U | S-U | U | U | 7,000-U | U | U | U |
| 7/6 | 16,000-U | 2,000-U | 16,000-U | 4,000-U | 7,000-U | U | 16,000-U | U |
| 7/7 | U | U | U | U | U | U | U | U |

Note: DGN = drift gillnet; SGN = set gillnet; U = unlimited (no limits); S = suspended (no buying).

^a Suspended for half day.

Preliminary 2009 Bristol Bay salmon harvest and escapement by district and species.

| District | Sockeye | Chinook | Chum | Pink | Coho | TOTAL |
|--------------------------|----------------|----------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|--------------|
| Naknek-Kvichak Catch | 8,519,345 | 938 | 258,141 | 31 | 542 | 8,778,997 |
| Escapement-Kvichak Twr. | 2,266,140 | N.A. | N.A. | N.A. | N.A. | 2,266,140 |
| Naknek Twr. | 1,169,466 | N.A. | N.A. | N.A. | N.A. | 1,169,466 |
| Alagnak Twr. | 970,818 | N.A. | N.A. | N.A. | N.A. | 970,818 |
| NK Total | 12,925,769 | 938 | 258,141 | 31 | 542 | 13,185,421 |
| Egegik Catch | 11,582,050 | 275 | 124,131 | 0 | 11,572 | 11,718,028 |
| Escapement-Egegik Twr. | 1,146,276 | N.A. | N.A. | N.A. | N.A. | 1,146,276 |
| Egegik Total | 12,728,326 | 275 | 124,131 | 0 | 11,572 | 12,864,304 |
| Ugashik Catch | 2,553,045 | 714 | 65,439 | 1 | 2,568 | 2,621,767 |
| Escapement-Ugashik Twr. | 1,346,118 | N.A. | N.A. | N.A. | N.A. | 1,346,118 |
| Ugashik Total | 3,899,163 | 714 | 65,439 | 1 | 2,568 | 3,967,885 |
| Nushagak Catch | 7,670,753 | 24,058 | 775,340 | 310 | 35,529 | 8,505,990 |
| Escapement- Wood Twr. | 1,319,232 | N.A. | N.A. | N.A. | N.A. | 1,319,232 |
| Igushik | 514,188 | N.A. | N.A. | N.A. | N.A. | 514,188 |
| Nushagak | 484,149 | 81,480 | 438,481 | N.A. | N.A. | 1,004,110 |
| Nushagak Total | 9,988,322 | 105,538 | 1,213,821 | 310 | 35,529 | 11,343,520 |
| Togiak Catch | 574,280 | 4,417 | 143,418 | 157 | 8,566 | 730,838 |
| Escapement - Togiak Twr. | 313,946 | N.A. | N.A. | N.A. | N.A. | 313,946 |
| Togiak Total | 888,226 | 4,417 | 143,418 | 157 | 8,566 | 1,044,784 |
| Bristol Bay Catch | 30,899,473 | 30,402 | 1,366,469 | 499 | 58,777 | 32,355,620 |
| Bristol Bay Escapement | 9,530,333 | 81,480 | 438,481 | N.A. | N.A. | 10,050,294 |
| Bristol Bay Total Run | 40,429,806 | 111,882 | 1,804,950 | 499 | 58,777 | 42,405,914 |

Note: Total run data does not include sport or subsistence harvests.